

DATE: May 9, 2024

MEMO TO: Gina Roberts, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: Mary E. Kann
Director of Administration

RECOMMENDATION: Provide policy direction regarding an amendment to the Personnel Policies and Procedures to delete Personnel Policy 11.4 – Physical Fitness Test.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED: Leadership

FINANCIAL DATA: There would be a cost savings of approximately \$2,000 per year as a result of not sending officers for physicals prior to the fitness test.

BACKGROUND: In January 2023, staff recommended to the Finance Committee that the Personnel Policies and Procedures be amended to delete Personnel Policy 11.4 – Physical Fitness Test (“Policy 11.4”). Staff had surveyed local police departments and, at the time, found Policy 11.4 to be outdated. Therefore, the recommendation was made to delete Policy 11.4. During Committee discussion of the recommendation, it was noted that Chief Tannahill was soon to retire, with a new Chief starting. Therefore, the Committee decided to wait for the new Chief to review the policy and make a recommendation.

In consultation with Chief Davis, he confirmed that the existing Policy 11.4 is outdated, no longer an industry standard, and it puts the District in a situation of assuming more liability. The District has adopted a more holistic approach to officer wellness. Specifically, Public Safety department staff now have access to in-house personal fitness training, nutritional counseling, and added mental health support services, which collectively provide a greater benefit to staff than the physical fitness exam required by Policy 11.4.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Manager of Board Operations, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Deputy Director of Human Resources & Risk, Director of Public Safety, Corporate Counsel.



11.4 Physical Fitness Test

Effective Date: April 15, 1983

Revision Date: August 13, 1983, November 10, 2000, March 9, 2001, June 21, 2002, April 9, 2013, June 28, 2018

Policy

As charged by the Illinois Revised Statutes and the ordinances of the Lake County Forest Preserves District, it is essential to the safety and protection of the public that sworn law enforcement officers of the Public Safety Division maintain a level of physical condition to serve the District and the public in any situation as charged by the Illinois Revised Statutes.

It is the policy of the District to conduct physical fitness tests to aid in the assessment of physical condition. The effectiveness and efficiency of sworn law enforcement carrying out their duties depend on upon their physical strength, coordination, agility, and endurance.

Physical fitness has been demonstrated to be a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ). Job analysis that account for physical fitness have demonstrated that they are underlying factors determining the physiological readiness to perform a variety of critical physical tasks. The unfit officer is less able to respond fully to strenuous physical activity. Physical fitness can minimize the health risks for law enforcement officers.

Procedure

1. Physical fitness tests shall be conducted by the Public Safety Division with the assistance of Human Resources.
2. Sworn law enforcement officers are required to take a physical fitness test every two years to continue employment. Prior to taking the test the employee shall be examined by a physician who will determine the employee's medical fitness and the employee's medical ability to take the physical fitness test. The District shall pay the cost of the required medical exam.
3. Employees unable to participate in the physical fitness test due to medical reasons shall notify the Human Resource Division in writing as soon as possible and shall undertake measures to solve their medical issues. An employee unable to take the test for medical reasons shall be removed from active duty until the medical issue is resolved and the employee is able to return to work without limitations. A physical fitness test will be given as soon as the employee is medically able to take the test.



4. Employees unable to participate in the physical fitness test due to illness or non-medical reasons will be given a test after they are cleared to participate in the test.
5. Physical fitness testing will consist of four test components: a cardio-respiratory component, two dynamic strength components, and a flexibility component. Participants will be provided with an overall fitness rating stated as a percentile based on the approved criteria of the test. The criteria are based on norms established for each component by gender and age.
6. The physical fitness officer will submit a proposed test that includes these four components for review and approval by the Chief of the Ranger Police and Human Resources prior to the start of the two year testing cycle. The proposed test will define the components and include a scoring mechanism based on industry standards. The physical fitness test will be included as a position factor in the sworn law enforcement officer's performance appraisal every other year.
7. Any sworn officer that receives a rating of "does not meet expectations" will work with a certified physical fitness officer to design a plan to improve the officer's physical condition. The officer will be retested after 90 days to gauge improvement. Failure to participate in the improvement plan or failure to improve to "meets expectations" after three retests will be considered basis for discipline, subject to any additional terms or conditions as may be provided in any applicable collective bargaining agreement.